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14 February, 1985

The Editor,
International Herald Tribune,
181 Avenue Charless de Gaulle,
92521 Neuilly-sur-Seine,Cedex
Paris, France.

Sir,

Congressman MelLevine is either naive or has deliberately presented a biased picture, concerning the benefits of AWACS sale to Saudi Arabia, in his Feb.14 article: Rethinking Mideast Arms Sale.

The true position is that Saudi Arabia was manoeuvred into buying the AWACS primarily for the benefit of the U.S. and Israel and in the bargain was poorer by $8.5 billion. In this connection, rejecting criticism of AWACS' sale to Saudi Arabia, in July 22, 1981, Good Morning America programme, Casper Wienberger said:

> "The AWACS is an intelligence gathering plane. It is very necessary for US..... for Israel too, to have as much information as possible about possibly offensive activities by the Soviets or someone else in the whole region".

Surely Congressman Levine is aware of several huge military cities and airfields designed and built in Saudi Arabia with Saudi money but under the supervision and control of U.S. Corps of Engineers. Each of these cities is capable of taking 100,000 troops and airfield more than 100 military aircraft. The total strength of Saudi defence forces being well under 40,000, why provide for half a million troops? The explanation is quite simple; the 50 billion dollar facilities will be used by the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force when needed.

It can thus be seen that the U.S. has gained tremendously by selling arms to Saudi Arabia and Saudi Arabia has received nothing in return, not even a thank you for 50-80 billion dollar gift .

Congressman Levine's fears about Israel are unfounded. The U.S. is and has always been unequivocally committed to maintain Israel's military superiority over the Arab States; a commitment which has always been more than honoured and will no doubt continue to be honoured. Thus,infact, is the real cause of instability and conflict in the Middle East.

Yours sincerely,

S. Mukarram Ali